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New York

President:	Mr. Wittig	(Germany)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Sun Xiaobo
	Colombia	Mr. Alzate
	France	Mr. Briens
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Twenty-fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2012/641)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Twenty-fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2012/641)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Liberia to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Karin Landgren, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Staffan Tillander, Chair of the Liberian country configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and representative of Sweden, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/641, which contains the twenty-fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

I now give the floor to Ms. Landgren.

Ms. Landgren: The report of the Secretary-General now before the Council (S/2012/641) continues to reflect this year's particular focus on the evolution of United Nations engagement in Liberia. Since 2003, Liberia has transformed itself from a failed State into one well along the path to democracy and lasting peace. The country has made remarkable progress in institutional rebuilding, economic recovery and consolidation of its democratic processes. The presidential and legislative elections of 2011 demonstrated its capacity to manage a politically and logistically complex event. The subsequent peaceful formation of a new Government signaled the country's increased stability.

With Liberia on the verge of becoming a true success story, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) must walk a delicate balance, applauding successes and pulling back its support while continuing to accompany Liberia in areas crucial to lasting peace. The United Nations continues to provide security support to Liberia on a significant scale. But, as the Secretary-General notes in his report, security measures alone will not create lasting stability in Liberia. The reinforcement of the national security sector should go hand in hand with national reconciliation and structural changes aimed at addressing the underlying causes of past conflict. Achieving that, however, will take both political commitment and financial resources.

During its visit in May, the Council saw first hand both Liberia's promise as well as the remaining challenges. The Government is firmly committed to taking on the security responsibilities now performed by the Mission. On the basis of a recent joint transition workshop held by the Government and UNMIL, we have updated our joint planning structures and are reviewing the linkages between these structures, donor coordination mechanisms and Liberia's development frameworks for greater coherence. We have designed a graphic road map to help illustrate phase by phase the demands on the Liberian security sector and to give the Government the necessary lead time to adjust its security posture.

Addressing capacity gaps in the security sector will be important to a successful and well-managed transition. As the technical assessment mission concluded, national security agencies are not yet able to maintain stability without the support of UNMIL. The technical assessment mission also set out other areas that continue to need attention.

How best to address capacity needs was a major theme of our recent workshop, and Liberia's international partners — including Ambassador Tillander, the Chair of the Liberia country configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission — were heavily engaged. With a growing annual budget — at $672 million for 2012-2013, up by nearly a quarter on last year — Liberia is increasingly able to find national resources to help finance the security sector. But the country has many competing priorities. The recent public expenditure review of the Liberian security sector, conducted by UNMIL and the World Bank, concluded that it would take another six or seven years until Liberia can cover these costs independently. In the meantime, donor support will be essential.

The Liberia National Police (LNP) has made headway, recently doubling its physical capacity at the

police academy and, in June, deploying to the Côte d'Ivoire border with the Armed Forces of Liberia. But given the relatively large burden the police will bear as UNMIL transitions, considerable attention should be given to increasing police professionalism and logistics capacity. Also, increased resources will be needed for recurring costs. After the transition workshop, the Government was able to identify additional resources for the police, reportedly as much as a 26-per cent increase from last year. Of particular concern, however, is a decreased allocation for the police training academy at a time when the need is so great to scale up LNP recruitment and training.

The Police Support Unit and the Emergency Response Unit — specialized bodies responsible for riot control and quick reaction — will become central to national response to security incidents as UNMIL draws down. The strength of the Police Support Unity needs to grow to at least 1,000, of which it is currently over 25 per cent short, mindful always of maintaining quality and professionalism.

Given the porosity of Liberia's borders and the security and political challenges in the Mano River Union, supporting the Government to form an effective and professional immigration service is a high priority. The United Nations Police will form a dedicated unit to work with the Government on the strategic plan of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. Through this, the Bureau should emerge with better-defined functions and a rationalized structure. Vetting of Bureau personnel is also central to these reforms.

Building the capacity of the security sector needs to be properly framed. As important as numbers is police professionalism. Liberia's national security strategy, and a drive to implement the security related legislation signed into law last year, can help to achieve this. A new police law, a civilian complaints board and legislation on gun control are part of the scaffolding for a sound security sector, joining last month's establishment of a national small arms commission.

Strengthened security capacity and regulation will need to be matched with a stronger justice system if the public is to have confidence in the State's capacity to protect and provide justice. The Justice and Security Joint Programme, agreed among all rule of law actors in December 2011, coherently captures national priorities, and will guide the development of this sector over the next three years. The programme includes five justice and security hubs, the first of which is soon to be completed with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund. These hubs decentralize justice and security services, historically centred in Monrovia, bringing them closer to rural populations.

Constitutional reform and national reconciliation are recognized as central to peace consolidation in Liberia. In August, the President appointed a five-person constitution review committee, whose members represent various political, ethnic and religious backgrounds. The scope of the committee's task has not yet been made public. Separately, a constitutional reform initiative has been advanced by a group called the Political Consultative Forum, composed of all major political parties, including the ruling party, and civil society groups. The Law Reform Commission and the Governance Commission are also engaged, and the Liberia Bar Association has recently made recommendations in this area.

Views differ on whether Liberia should engage in comprehensive constitutional reform or simply amend selected provisions. Any revision must be endorsed by referendum, which implies a high degree of public awareness. A truly inclusive and consultative process holds one of the keys to overcoming the structural imbalances and injustices that continue to present risks for the stability of the country.

As the Secretary-General's special report of this April (S/2012/230) underlined, a highly centralized system of governance is rooted in the current Constitution. Reform opens the door to greater decentralization and to allowing all Liberians to enjoy dependable access to services and greater political inclusion. Such reforms are also manifestly a factor in national reconciliation.

A draft reconciliation road map is currently under review and due to be launched in October. Coordinated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the road map covers some principal recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including the "Palava Hut" programme, where perpetrators can seek public forgiveness. Other elements recommended by the Commission, such as those on impunity, remain largely unaddressed in the draft road map. As this process moves forward, the United Nations would encourage full, inclusive consultation and public discussion, allowing all Liberians to feel part of a national healing process. The United Nations would also like to see

an invigorated Independent National Commission on Human Rights, and UNMIL is ready to offer support to this end.

The Liberian Government has continued its efforts to mitigate security threats at its border with Côte d'Ivoire. Both Governments and the two Missions met in June to discuss enhanced border security and protection of civilians. Following this, Liberia deployed Operation Restore Hope, in which the Armed Forces of Liberia, the Emergency Response Unit and the Bureau of Immigration are taking part. This is the first major deployment of the Armed Forces of Liberia. The operation has been conducted in border areas with only limited localized support from UNMIL. The Government has taken additional measures, including the closure of the border, with exceptions on humanitarian grounds.

The Mission and the Government have long received reporting of alleged training and recruitment of armed groups on Liberian soil, including in reports of the Panel of Experts, some of these alleging the involvement of Ivorians residing in refugee camps in Liberia. A comprehensive national strategy to address the issue of mercenaries and foreign combatants is still needed. When I visited the PTP refugee camp in Grand Gedeh county last month, refugee leaders and local authorities all called for greater camp security. Several measures that were previously agreed have yet to be implemented, including an unarmed National Police presence at the camps and adequate screening of arriving asylum seekers by the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission.

UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) have strengthened our inter-mission cooperation on border issues. The missions remain ready to work with both Governments on a shared border strategy, as the Council has called for in resolution 2062 (2012), including not only security measures but also longer-term elements of reconciliation, justice and employment.

Since June, the missions have conducted mirrored patrols, and have held five meetings under a revitalized Operation Mayo, which includes civilian participation in joint border meetings to build confidence and draw on the strong community ties on both sides of the border. UNMIL and UNOCI have secured the approval of their host Governments to conduct cross-border air operations and aerial reconnaissance missions, which may also have a deterrent effect when employed in response to known threats. We are also setting up hotlines between sector commanders to share information as quickly as possible at the field level

UNMIL is able to begin the transition because of the progress that Liberia has made since 2003. The Mission represents nearly a decade of major investment by the international community. That investment has paid handsome dividends, supporting Liberians with a time and space free of war. That has made possible two democratic elections and steps towards national reform on a large scale. Liberia is becoming a nation at peace with itself and with its past, a nation able to channel its vast economic potential into the better lives its people have waited for.

In the context of a carefully managed transition, the Council's own calls for a coherent approach to peacekeeping and peacebuilding are particularly important. As UNMIL works with the Government and partners to chart a critical path towards an exit strategy, Liberia's stability must remain the top priority.

I look forward to working closely with all Liberians and with the Council in support of Liberia's continued peaceful advancement. I would like to thank all of UNMIL's Liberian partners for having welcomed me so warmly.

The President: I thank Ms. Landgren for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Tillander.

Mr. Tillander: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to contribute to the Council's deliberations today on Liberia. I am pleased to be here together with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Karin Landgren. I appreciate all of the support that the Special Representative and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) have given me in my work. I also appreciate the guidance provided by you, Mr. President, for today's briefing. I shall focus my remarks on three issues — the political agenda, UNMIL transition and the Liberia National Police (LNP) — and in particular how the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) will engage and provide support on those issues.

First, on moving forward the political agenda, coherent and inclusive national reconciliation should be at the centre of the Liberian peace process. That is a core peacebuilding priority in the Statement of Mutual

Commitments, which is the compact between the PBC and the Government of Liberia. Part of that process entails mending relations between the State and society, between communities and between individuals. That includes reformulating the Liberian historical narrative, including giving recognition to past persecution, discrimination and marginalization. Reconciliation is also linked to processes of constitutional review, decentralization and electoral reform. All of those are essential parts of the broader peacebuilding process in Liberia. Those are transformative changes; a critical factor for success will be the inclusivity of the processes.

One of the main challenges so far to the reconciliation process has been to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach. Since last year, the PBC has urged national actors to develop a road map on reconciliation. That road map has now been developed. The validation process has been initiated and, if inclusive, will generate national ownership for the road map.

Later this month, the PBC will engage in discussions with Internal Affairs Minister Nelson, who is responsible for coordinating the reconciliation and decentralization processes. It is my ambition to keep the PBC configuration informed and engaged in a regular dialogue. Maintaining political will is essential. In that respect, the Statement of Mutual Commitments serves as a useful accountability tool.

Financial resources, in addition to the Liberian Government's allocation of $5 million, are also needed. We have a responsibility in that respect. The PBC pushed for the road map; we now need to consider ways to support its implementation, financially as well as with the in-kind resources that might be required.

A vibrant civil society acts as an important source for civic engagement, and will also be vital to national ownership of reconciliation. Yet, in Liberia those actors are constrained by capacity limitations. We need to find ways to encourage their work and strengthen civil society, including by building their core capacities. The PBC will maintain focus on this issue and I will continue to meet with representatives of civil society during my visits.

The PBC will liaise closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to ensure that our efforts are fully coherent with those of the United Nations. With the support of the United Nations country team, UNMIL has a vital role to play in reconciliation. The PBC fully supports the suggestion that this should be reflected in UNMIL's mandate.

The second issue is PBC support to UNMIL and the Liberian Government to prepare for the transition. Strengthening rule of law and security sector reform are key in that context. They are also priorities for the PBC. While there has been progress, there are still some significant capacity gaps with regard to justice and security actors, in particular the Liberia National Police. Oversight and accountability mechanisms also need to be firmly established.

As part of the Statement of Mutual Commitments, the Liberian Government is committed to increasing the budget for justice and security. The PBC will continue to watch that as part of our ongoing dialogue on the Commitments. We will also benefit from the public expenditure review carried out by the World Bank and the United Nations. The review offers advice on what costs the Government needs to assume and how to gradually incorporate transition costs into the national budget. Later this week, I will have an opportunity to discuss the follow-up to the review with the World Bank, as well as funding directed to critical peacebuilding priorities within the international envelope for development.

The review also shows a considerable funding gap over the next several years. As the transition advances, the international community must step up its efforts to support a smooth transition. The message should be that the United Nations, the international financial institutions and bilateral partners will continue to engage and support Liberia. The United Nations country team, I am told, will be stepping up its efforts in the coming United Nations Peacebuilding and Development Assistance Framework cycle. UNICEF will be adding extra resources to its country programme. I encourage other United Nations agencies to do the same. As Chair, I will work with configuration members to enhance our efforts.

Key to resource mobilization is a coordinated approach based on Government priorities. The Justice and Security Board and its annual work plan offer a comprehensive and coordinated basis, which is also aligned with the work of the PBC, the Liberian Peacebuilding Programme and the Statement of Mutual Commitments. But efforts must be made to enhance the functioning of the Trust Fund for Justice and Security. Bilateral partners are presently working closely with

the United Nations Development Programme to that end. A similar set-up is being discussed for support to reconciliation activities, and it must work without flaws or delays.

A key project already under way is the regional justice and security hubs. The hubs should facilitate the establishment of an effective and accountable State presence throughout the country. That will also contribute to closing gaps and avoiding any appearance of a vacuum. However, delays in the construction of the first hub generated valid questions about its viability. The response can best be provided through action on the ground, by completing the establishment of the hub and showing its impact. As we begin to assess the impact on the surrounding communities, if security is enhanced and access to justice increased, the PBC will have a persuasive presentation for resource mobilization for the next hubs.

Several lessons have already been identified. The United Nations system must be able to more effectively coordinate its efforts between it and the Government. Time frames must be adhered to. The design of the hubs needs to be adjusted according to the circumstances of each region. If the lessons are effectively applied, it should be possible to complete the next four hubs within tight time frames. The PBC will continue to monitor the implementation of the hub and to draw attention to shortcomings when necessary.

Finally, the third point has to do with PBC support for capacity-building of the Liberia National Police. I have already touched upon some aspects, but would like to add the following.

After a request in May by the President of Liberia, the PBC facilitated consultations on how to strengthen and coordinate training support to Liberian National Police. The outcome was an understanding that focus should continue on Government ownership, building on UNMIL accomplishments and its overarching role. But it is also clear that, to ensure a smooth transition, we must explore modalities for closer cooperation between UNMIL, bilateral partners and the country team, with the purpose of improving the quality and numbers of the LNP.

The PBC will continue to encourage partners to get involved, increase support and enhance coordination. That should include increasing their role in coordinating efforts and leading in specific areas. The PBC will explore how it can contribute to creative approaches to deploying highly skilled officers to specific professional posts, which was an issue raised by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the briefing of the troop- and police-contributing countries on 6 September.

The PBC is in the process of finalizing a resource mobilization strategy and a corresponding work plan. We will work closely with the Government and UNMIL. The intention is to be a support to the Liberian Government and its resource mobilization efforts. A primary consideration will be how to build on the investment of the PBF and its catalytic role. There is much potential and good examples, such as Australian support to PBF-funded youth empowerment and partner support to the PBF-funded United Nations Habitat work on land conflict resolution.

Later this month, we will meet with the Minister of Finance, Mr. Konneh, and other key PBC counterparts, who will brief the Commission on progress on Government commitments. As previously indicated, the Statement of Mutual Commitments is a valuable accountability tool for both the Government and members of the configuration.

We will continue to use it to its full potential, and will keep the Council informed of the outcome of our second review.

I thank you, Mr. President, for allowing the PBC to share its views. We remain at the Council's disposal for any questions now, as well as in the future.

The President: I thank Mr. Tillander for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Liberia.

Ms. Kamara (Liberia): I am grateful for the opportunity afforded me to participate in this briefing as the Council prepares to consider the twenty-fourth progress report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/641) on the activities of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

As routine as such reports may seem, each one presents an occasion for reflection and a renewal of commitment, especially as they are usually linked to decisions on the extension of mandates. I hope that on this occasion consensus will be facilitated by the Council's earlier endorsement, in April 2012, of the plan for a phased transition, leading to the reconfiguration of UNMIL's presence by June 2015.

In that regard, I would like to express my Government's deep appreciation of the steadfast support that the Council has provided to Liberia and for the decision that it will hopefully take on the continuation of our partnership with the United Nations through UNMIL.

I would like to echo the sentiments of welcome to the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Karin Landgren, which she has already received from my President and other officials of the Liberian Government in Monrovia. My colleagues at the Permanent Mission of Liberia and I look forward to working with her in her challenging, but hopefully enriching, assignment.

I thank Ms. Landgren for her very informative and insightful overview of the situation in Liberia, which highlights the areas of progress and the challenges that remain, with all of which we can fully associate. We are confident that her vast professional experience will enable her to fulfil her duties very well indeed.

I wish also to recognize the good stewardship of Mr. Moustapha Soumaré, who steered the UNMIL ship for the past six months and is deserving of our commendation. In his presentation, the Chair of the Liberia configuration, Mr. Tillander, also demonstrated the value added of Liberia's engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). Both presentations demonstrate the complementarity and mutually reinforcing effect of those two arms of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Needless to say, the PBC is helping to build capacity, to promote decentralization and to provide support for national reconciliation. Bringing the two arms together in such a briefing can only be immensely beneficial to the Council's work. Much has already been said. I do not intend to repeat, but simply to emphasize a few points.

The first point is that security along the Liberia—Côte d'Ivoire border is a major preoccupation of my Government. That worrying situation requires close attention and a high level of vigilance, since it poses potential risks to national and regional security. The deployment of civilian and military forces to border areas for protracted periods is stretching already scarce Government resources. The capacity to meet our obligations to the refugees in the camps is strained. That was mentioned by the Special Representative. In a visit to the Economic Community of West African States Commission in Abuja last Friday, the President of Liberia, Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, underscored the gravity of the situation and warned of the possibility that it could overwhelm Liberia's nascent security services, with implications for both sides of the border. In commending actions that UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire are taking in support of the national forces to manage the situation, we stress the imperative of continued cooperation and collaboration between national and international forces on both sides of the border.

Secondly, I want to reaffirm my Government's intention to honour the commitments that it has made, whether in the Statement of Mutual Commitments with the PBC or in other instruments and plans concluded with UNMIL in the pursuit of indentified priorities. The Government has subscribed to certain principles of governance as a matter of national policy and has aligned itself with countries of a similar persuasion in the Group of Seven Plus. We seek to promote justice, security, popular participation for our people and the effective management and use of our national resources for their benefit. The seemingly slow progress in certain areas, which we acknowledge, does not reflect a wavering of political will, but rather a limitation of means, notably in the capacity and financial resources available. They are ultimately the determinants of allocations in a small budget that aims to address immense needs. Let me affirm that the Government is very anxious to accelerate progress to a level that meets the expectations of our friends in the international community and also responds to the aspirations of the Liberian people.

The third point of emphasis relates to the Secretary-General's report on UNMIL of 15 August, which is the basis for our discussion today. We appreciate the effort to present a balanced account of developments, which is usually the hallmark of such reports. However, I have been instructed to express my Government's disappointment that a few assertions do not reach the expected level of accuracy. For the purposes of the closed consultations, I have taken the liberty to share with members of the Council — I do not know if they have received them — my Government's comments on the report, which were conveyed to Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General and Head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

We believe that the relatively open and constructive relationship that has been nurtured between my Government and UNMIL over the years should allow

for a discussion of some of those draft documents, not reserving any right to veto for the Government but enabling a joint effort to vet and verify assertions that would be put in the public domain. The reports help to shape and can influence the views of the international community about Liberia, including its potential investment partners. Notwithstanding the United Nations culture and practice, which may prohibit the sharing of such draft documents a priori, it is prudent that some arrangement be agreed to avoid that type of intervention. In making public its assessments, the United Nations is respectfully encouraged to observe the principle of do no harm so that it does not inadvertently deepen the fault lines in our society, many of which are still triggers of conflict.

The United Nations engagement in Liberia, in all of its aspects, continues to be critical to the country's stability and progress. The nature and form of that engagement will inevitably change, but we are receptive to a smooth and orderly transition in line with conditions on the ground. That is why my Government has endorsed the recommendations of the technical assessment mission, as contained in the April report (S/2012/230). We already see the United Nations country team redesigning its programmes in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2013-2017 and synchronizing activities with UNMIL's drawdown plan. On Monday, we participated in the presentation of the draft country programme for Liberia of the United Nations Development Programme, which covers the same four-year timeframe.

All of what I have referred to are indicators of a long-term partnership. Liberia appreciates the Security Council's invaluable contribution to the partnership and to the maintenance of an environment conducive to the implementation of activities aimed at improving the well-being of the Liberian people. We are also grateful to our bilateral partners, many of whom some of those around the table represent, for the support. We look forward to continued engagement.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on this subject.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.